Increasing the Participation Rate for International Behaviorists at the Convention of the Association for Behavior Analysis

Marsha Lee Benz
Western Michigan University

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INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION RATE FOR INTERNATIONAL
BEHAVIORISTS AT THE CONVENTION OF THE
ASSOCIATION FOR BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

by

Marsha Lee Benz

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
Department of Psychology

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
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INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION RATE FOR INTERNATIONAL BEHAVIORISTS AT THE CONVENTION OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

Marsha Lee Benz, M.A.
Western Michigan University, 1986

This is a descriptive study that reviewed past participation of international behaviorists at the Association for Behavior Analysis (ABA) convention, to provide more help to these presenters to improve the experience, and to disseminate behavioral information outside of the United States by trying to increase international participation at the ABA convention.

These methods were used to invite the behaviorists: (a) call for papers, (b) personalized invitations, and (c) poster invitations. Procedures used to improve the convention experience were: (a) an interest questionnaire, and (b) pre- and post-convention surveys.

Comparisons were made between the number of international presenters from years 1981 through 1986. From 1981 through 1985 there was an average of 9.8. In 1986 there were 48 international presenters (28 paper presenters and 20 poster presenters). It is plausible that the personalized invitations and poster invitations contributed to the increase.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Liliana Mayo, Judith LeBlanc, Richard Couch, and the ABA International Committee at the University of Kansas should also be recognized for their time spent in making the international sessions of the 1986 ABA convention run so smoothly.

Special appreciation goes to Lisa LeBlanc for her effort spent creating graphs for me.

Marsha Lee Benz
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Expansion of Behavioral Psychology

Although the early beginnings of behavioral psychology started in Pavlov's laboratory in The Soviet Union, behaviorism was basically developed in the United States (Kazdin, 1978; Lutzker & Martin, 1981). In 1915, Watson and Lashley began experimenting with human conditioning (Kazdin, 1978). Following Watson, Rosalie Rayner and Mary Cover Jones also dealt with conditioning and deconditioning of emotions (Kazdin, 1978). Several others studied overlapping learning paradigms, until B.F. Skinner made the sharp distinction between classical and operant conditioning in The Behavior of Organisms, in 1938 (Kazdin, 1978).

Practical applications of behaviorism have expanded significantly since the early work of Skinner. The strategies of behavioral technology are now used in all areas of our culture—in clinical settings, in communities and organizations, in business and industry, in education and even in the nuclear family (Gambrill, 1977; Leitenberg, 1976; Michael, 1985).

The technology is now affecting the everyday way of
life of many people. For instance, people are using behavioral technology for toilet training children, reducing and eliminating simple and complex reading problems, correcting weight/obesity problems, organizing and running businesses, implementing sports and exercise programs, taking care of problems in criminal justice systems, and for designing instructional materials (Lutzker and Martin, 1981; Michael, 1985). Behavioral technology promises to help people live easier, healthier, and more productive lives.

More traditional applications of psychology have also been expanded. For example, Riordan, Iwata, Finney, Wohl, and Stanley (1984), and Rast, Johnston, Allen, and Drum (1985) addressed behavioral problems such as eating disorders; Sisson and Barrett (1984) investigated verbal communication; and Avery-Clark and Laws (1984) studied sexual deviances.

If behavioral technology could be expanded more thoroughly outside of the United States, it could help more people lead better lives. Latin America is the geographic area showing the most rapid growth in behavioral psychology outside of North America. However, the field of behaviorism appears fairly new to many Latin American, European and Eastern countries, and has barely been introduced in many other countries.

A major obstacle in the information exchange of behavioral technology is lack of relevant written
communication between countries. Russell (1984) discussed the inability of those speaking languages other than English to get information from English-written articles. Even when translations were given, the meanings were often changed. Russell stated that international relations on social and political levels have suffered seriously in the past from semantic misunderstandings. It is possible that similar problems may affect the diffusion of several types of information. Alternative methods of disseminating behavioral technology outside of the United States should be explored.

Techniques for the Diffusion and Dissemination of Information

A few researchers have studied how information is diffused (Czepiel, 1974; Harrison, 1985; Putnam & Jones, 1982). Word-of-mouth, written communication, and conventions are among the diffusion/dissemination modes. Noting the key variables in dissemination may facilitate information exchange and behavioral technology adoption. Unfortunately, many studies in these areas were not analyzed in a behavioral manner, so there is no way to discriminate how subjective these measures were.

Word-of-Mouth

Czepiel (1974) presented a study that dealt with the
use of word-of-mouth diffusion process among decision makers in the steel industry. The object of the word-of-mouth information was the major technological innovation of continuous casting in the steel industry. Czepiel conducted highly structured, individual interviews, which included mostly scaled items and some open-ended questions. Czepiel asked subjects who they contacted for information about the innovation, who contacted them about the innovation, and if the subjects had regular advice/opinion exchanges with any other companies. Each company participating in the study gave a list of people who were a part of the innovation adoption process. An average of two people from each firm were interviewed. Czepiel found that there was an informal communication network that connected several companies and facilitated the diffusion process. A weakness of this study is that the only objective measures were self-report interviews, some of which occurred several years after the innovation adoption took place. Subjects may not have accurate recall after a long period of time so events may be distorted.

**Written Information**

Hoffman and Roman (1984) also completed an observational study that addressed diffusion as it relates to organizational innovation. The subject was the introduction of the Federal Alcoholism Policy.
Several modalities of information diffusion were used to increase supervisors' compliance in communicating information about the innovation to subordinates: (a) verbal, (b) written, (c) general meeting and, (d) training sessions. Results showed the more modalities used, the better the supervisor compliance. The modality deemed most important in any combination was that of written communication. However, the experimenters did not manipulate written communication within the diffusion process so the conclusions should be considered with reservations.

**Conventions**

King (1981) talked about the dissemination and adoption of behavioral technology. He recommended that time be reserved in symposia and workshops at national and regional conventions for discussing methods for disseminating behavioral technology. King suggested arranging for those behavior analysts most competent in this area to speak, and have them actively teach the skills involved in getting an innovation disseminated and adopted.

Tuma (1982) also suggested conventions as a means of relaying information. Tuma discussed the importance of conferences as an information dissemination mode in her proposal for The National Conference on Professional
Preparation of Clinical Child Psychologists. Tuma stated that the conference technique may be useful in communicating recent research findings, conducting practicum workshops, and establishing lines of communication. Increased attendance at international conventions could aid in the accomplishment of information exchange.

**Key Variables in Dissemination**

Above, some techniques were discussed in the diffusion and dissemination of information. Stolz (1981) stated that several key variables must operate concurrently for the dissemination to occur.

Stolz discussed how one might think that government adoption of an innovation is based on data from carefully designed studies. In truth, our government often reacts to social problems intuitively and immediately, without the empirically-based data which would indicate that the innovation might be effective. Stolz also indicated when specific behavioral technologies are most likely to be disseminated into, and adopted by governmental agencies. Listed below are ten possible key variables common to several governmental agencies that have adopted some type of behavioral technology (Stolz, 1981):

1. Research data showed that the innovation was effective.
2. The technology met the continuing mission of the adopting agency.

3. The potential adoptor had a pressing management problem.

4. The availability of the dissemination to the potential adoptor was timely.

5. Potential adoptors were able to view ongoing (model) programs.

6. The adoption was proposed by policymakers, rather than by the researchers who developed the technology.

7. The intervention was tailored to local conditions.

8. Those who would have to implement the program were involved in the preliminary research and in asking for the adoption.

9. Funds were available for dissemination.

10. A key person, trained, enthusiastic, and with significant social skills, persisted through political infighting to protect the program from going under (pp. 498-500).

Stolz states that the more of these variables concurrently present within a given situation, the more likely it is that the behavioral technology will be disseminated.

A Technique for Increasing Attendance at Events

One method to increase attendance at any particular event is through prompts. An experiment conducted by Turner and Vernon (1976) dealt with telephone prompts to decrease the number of "no-shows" for mental health appointments. The study concluded that the intervention...
of prompts significantly decreased the number of no-shows.

Based on the previous articles it might be concluded that word-of-mouth, written information, and conventions are reasonable modes of communication. In addition, prompts may increase attendance at events.

The Association for Behavior Analysis

The Convention Program of The Association for

Behavior Analysis (1981) states:

The Association for Behavior Analysis (ABA) is an interdisciplinary group of professionals, paraprofessionals and students interested in the experimental, theoretical and applied analysis of behavior. Founded in 1974, the Midwestern Association of Behavior Analysis (MABA) was organized to establish a separate identity for the behavioral analysis group of the larger psychological community. In 1978, MABA became the Association for Behavior Analysis. A major purpose of the Association has been to provide a forum for the discussion of issues and the dissemination of information pertinent to the interests of the membership by means of an annual convention.

At the convention, behaviorists can attend various presentations concerning behavioral technology, and in turn, take the information home with them to use for the good of their communities. Additionally, behaviorists in the United States can obtain information coming from other countries.

Although this convention is internationally known, participation by international behaviorists has been very low.
Objectives of the Present Study

The first objective of the present study consisted of disseminating behavioral information through increasing the participation (the number of presenters) of international (non-North American) behaviorists at the ABA convention. This researcher used personalized invitations to increase attendance at the convention. It was hypothesized that by using personalized invitations, more international behaviorists will present at the ABA convention. The second objective was to create the best possible experience for the international presenters attending the 1986 convention. A review of the past six years attendance and participation was also made.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects and Setting

In this study, 148 professional behaviorists were invited to the 12th Annual Convention of the Association for Behavior Analysis. Of this group, 101 were males and 47 were females. All subjects were international behaviorists belonging to at least one of two international associations for behavioral psychology or were associated with a behavior newsletter: (a) The Association for Behavior Analysis (ABA); (b) The "Asociacion Latino Americana de Analisis y Modificacion del Comportamiento" (ALAMOC); and (c) the International Newsletter of Social Behaviorism (INSB). Of the 148, 62 belonged to ABA; 70 to ALAMOC, and 16 to INSB. Thirty-two people belonged to more than one group (if the individual belonged to ABA and another group he/she was counted in the ABA group).

The selection of the participants was conducted in the following manner: (a) All the current international members of ABA (excluding Canada because of an already large attendance) were included in the study; (b) the
ALAMOC members were selected by the organization's president. The ALAMOC president used two selection criteria. First, the persons selected were representatives of ALAMOC in different Latin American countries. Second, in the opinion of the president, they were active behaviorists in their respective countries; (c) all individuals listed as editors, associate editors or those on the advisory board of the INSB were included in this study (except those individuals from Canada).

The study was conducted from the ABA office at Western Michigan University, and at the ABA convention that took place in May 1986, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This study also involved the Department of Human Development and Family Life, at the University of Kansas, in Lawrence, Kansas. This is where the headquarters of the ABA International Committee is based.

Procedures

Primary Procedures

Three procedures were used to increase the participation of international behaviorists at the 1986 ABA convention: (a) call for papers, (b) personalized invitation, and (c) poster invitations.
Call for Papers. This included a traditional invitation (a brief, non-personalized letter) inviting the person to send in a paper to be reviewed by the ABA office, instructions on presenting, due dates and a checklist for the paper or poster (this is not the same as the poster invitation). During the data collection period between 1981 and 1985, this was the only material sent to potential presenters. The ABA program coordinator sent out a call for papers to all of the international ABA members each year, starting in 1976. Calls for papers, in the present study, were sent in September 1985.

Personalized Invitation. The personalized invitation included the name of the individual, and stated knowledge of his/her expertise in the field of behavioral psychology. This invitation also pointed out the benefits of attending the convention for the individual and the organization with which the person was affiliated. Invitations sent to Latin America were in Spanish, all others were in English. The invitations were sent along with the call for papers on October 4, 1985, for the 1986 convention (Appendix A). Four were returned to sender.

Poster Invitation. This consisted of an invitation for international behaviorists (from The International Behavior Analyst Directory) to send a poster to the ABA.
convention irrespective of whether they could or could not attend. The poster invitations were sent mainly to Latin Americans (100 invitations to Latin Americans and 100 to other internationals). The poster invitations were sent by the headquarters of the ABA International Committee out of The University of Kansas, on August 1, 1985. These invitations were sent unsystematically, and there was no list maintained with all of the names of those who were sent these letters, so there is a question as to who received them. The Committee wrote each invitation in the native language of the behaviorist to whom it was being sent. This was the first request by The ABA International Committee for posters from international behaviorists, although posters were allowed in previous years if the presenters attended the convention (Appendix B).

Secondary Procedures

In addition to the primary techniques used to increase international participation, the following techniques were used to better the convention experience of the international presenters: (a) interest questionnaire and (b) pre- and post-convention evaluation surveys.

Interest Questionnaire. A questionnaire was sent out to the presenters, during the third week of March 1986, so
that the researcher could make arrangements for accommodations, translators, tourist excursions, and generally prepare for their arrival (see Appendix C). One of the purposes of this questionnaire was to arrange a meeting between the international presenters and American behaviorists with whom they requested interaction. A mailing of invitations was sent to these American behaviorists, on May 13, 1966, to request their attendance at the International Committee meeting at the convention.

Pre- and Post-Convention Evaluation Surveys. The pre-convention survey contained questions about the subjects' expectations, in terms of the knowledge the subjects wanted to gain from the convention. The post-convention survey included questions about how well the convention met these initial expectations. It also incorporated space for written suggestions. All of the international behaviorists were asked to fill out the surveys and return them to the researcher directly, or leave at the hotel front desk. Copies of the two surveys (including data on results) are presented in Appendix D.

Outcomes

Primary Outcomes

Data on four primary outcome variables were collected: (1) The number of responses to the
personalized invitation, (2) the number of international behaviorists who attended the ABA convention, (3) the number of international behaviorists who presented papers, and (4) the number of international behaviorists who presented posters at the ABA convention.

1. The first outcome was acceptance and non-acceptance responses received from the international behavior analysts to the personalized invitations. These responses were in the form of phone calls and letters received in the ABA office. All acceptance responses were due by November 4th, 1985. They were tallied by ABA office employees.

2. The second outcome was tallied after the ABA convention. It was the number of international persons who registered at the convention (including first authors only). This was tallied by the experimenter checking the registration records of ABA for 1986.

3. The third outcome was the number of subjects who presented a paper at the ABA convention (first authors only). This was scored by the experimenter checking the initial 1986 ABA Convention Program against the list of changes once the convention began. Presentation books from 1981 through 1985 were used in collecting data for previous years.

4. The fourth outcome was the number of international behaviorists who presented a poster at the
ABA convention. This was also scored by the experimenter checking the initial 1986 ABA presentation book against the list of changes once the convention began, and using presentation books from 1981 through 1985 for data of previous years.

Secondary Outcomes

Two more forms of information were collected from the subjects: (1) The information concerning an interest questionnaire asking ways to improve the convention experience (for example, through setting up sight-seeing activities and providing opportunities for the subjects to meet other behaviorists), and (2) the information obtained from the pre- and post-convention evaluation surveys given at the 1986 ABA convention. The resulting information from these two surveys was organized into the raw frequency of responses made per question along with associated percentages of response for the multiple choice segments. The open answer segments include all answers given by the respondents (repeated answers were not included more than once).

A comparison was made between the number of 1986 poster and paper presenters and the number of poster and paper presenters from the 1981 through 1985, taken from convention program records.
Evaluation Design

Two comparisons within the study were made: (1) poster presenter and paper presenters in the 1986 ABA convention were contrasted with previous ABA conventions; and (2) the pre- and post-convention evaluation surveys were compared. Only first authors of poster and papers were counted in this study, this was based on the assumption that the first authors were the persons most likely to attend and present at the convention.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Primary Results

The most impressive results include: (a) an increase in international paper presenters, (b) an increase in international poster presenters, (c) an increase in countries represented by the presenters, and (d) an increase in new presenters.

The range of paper presenters from 1981 through 1985 was two to 13, with an average of 7.2. In 1986 there were 28 paper presenters, 15 more than in any other year (see Figure 1). Of the 28 paper presenters in 1986, 12 received the call for papers/personalized/possible poster invitations, nine received the call for papers/personalized invitations, and seven received no formal invitation.

The increase in the number of international behaviorists presenting a poster from 1981 through 1986 was substantial. The only time there were poster presenters during the call for papers was 1983 and 1984. Twenty international behaviorists presented posters at the 1986 convention (see Figure 2). This was the first time poster invitations were sent. Of the 1986 poster

18
presenters, seven received the call for papers/personalized/possible poster invitation, three received the call for papers/personalized/poster invitation (these behaviorists definitely received the poster invitation), and 10 received the poster invitation alone.

Figure 1. International Paper Presenters From 1981 Through 1986.

Figure 3 consists of the number of new international presenters from 1981 to 1986. Names of poster presenters from 1986 were compared with names in the convention programs from 1981 through 1985. For example, if a name was not listed in the 1981 convention program, but was in 1982, the person was considered a new presenter.
for 1982. If the names did not appear during the entire 1981-1985 interval, they were counted as new presenters for 1986. There was only one new international presenter in 1982, but in 1983 the number jumped to eight and stayed fairly consistent with seven and five for the next two years. In 1986 there was an increase to 40 new paper and poster presenters (see Figure 3). Again, not all the poster presenters included in this total attended the convention, and there are no data on record concerning this issue.

Figure 2. International Poster Presenters From 1981 Through 1986.

Figure 4 and 5 show the increase in the countries the paper and poster presenters represent. The range for
both graphs combined for the 1981 through 1985 time span included participants from 2 to 6 countries. In 1986, there were 29 countries represented by the paper and poster presenters. ABA has not yet had participants from any countries on the continents of Africa or Antarctica.

Figure 3. New International Presenters From 1982 Through 1986.

For a more detailed description of the number of international behaviorists participating at the 1981 through 1986 ABA conventions, see Appendix E. This shows the number of paper and poster presenters by country and continent, for 1981 through 1986.
Secondary Results

Additional results include: (a) the percentages of people receiving various invitations, (b) the percentages of acceptance responses in relation to the various invitations, (c) the yearly number of ABA international memberships and convention registrants, (d) the percentages of ABA members presenting a paper each year, and (e) the pre- and post-convention evaluation survey results.

![Figure 4. The Number of Countries Represented by International Paper Presenters.](image-url)
Table 1 shows the number of paper or poster presenters who were sent the various invitations or no invitation at all. The data collected were separated into five groups, and by type of participation (paper or poster). All of the presenters in the poster invitation only section received the poster invitation, but there is no way to tell who in the call for papers/personalized/possible poster invitation section received the poster invitation.

Of the 50 acceptance responses (41 of which received at least one invitation), only two persons canceled their presentations. Of those who received the
papers/personalized/possible poster invitations or the call for papers/personalized/poster invitations, the papers/personalized invitations comprised 64.6% of the total acceptance responses, and those who were sent the poster invitation only comprised 20.8%. In total, 85.4% of the acceptance responses came from those sent at least one invitation. In response to various invitations, 15 persons sent letters saying they could not attend or present at the 1986 convention.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call/Personalized/ Possible Poster</th>
<th>Call/Personalized/ Poster Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call/Personalized/ Possible Poster</td>
<td>Call/Personalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6 consists of the number of international ABA memberships for the year, and the number of internationals (not necessarily ABA members, including attendees and presenters) registered at the convention. There was an upward trend from 1981 to 1986.

The percentages of international ABA members who
presented a paper from 1981 through 1986 are shown in Figure 7. This goes on the assumption that all the presenters from 1981 through 1985 are ABA members, which may not be true.

![Graph showing International ABA Members and Convention Registrants from 1981 to 1986]

Figure 6. International ABA Members and Convention Registrants.

Tables 2 and 3 include the more notable results from the 16 pre- and seven post-convention surveys that were returned. For complete results of these surveys, see Appendix D.
**Figure 7.** The Percentage of International ABA Members Presenting Papers.

**Table 2**

Modal Response Percentages for the Pre-Convention Evaluation Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reason for attendance</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>Professional contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations of convention</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>Great deal of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility of information</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>Career advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans to use information</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>Share with students and colleagues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How personalized invitation influenced attendance of those who received it</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Easier to get funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in translated behavioral material</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biggest problems in Behavior Analysis</td>
<td>44% Publication translation deficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38% Misconceptions about behaviorism, insufficient funds, and conflicts with traditional psychology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convention met expectations</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving future conventions</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>More time for exchanging research ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Aspects of the Present Study

The personalized invitation will not serve as a prompt for those people who did not receive the initial call for papers from ABA (non-ABA members). This invitation may serve as a prompt for ABA members. The call for papers sent out by the ABA office was sent before the personalized invitation; therefore, the personalized invitation could have served as a reminder to the potential presenters to send in their presenter acceptance sheet.

The personalized invitation could also have a rewarding value for the recipients, and it is doubtful that the call for papers alone would have such value. At the least, the personalized invitation showed the possible presenter that he/she was internationally known, and may receive special treatment (extra social rewards) at the convention.

The members of the ALAMOC group received invitations to the convention for the first time this year, so it is possible that these behaviorists only need a traditional invitation (included in the call for papers) for them to
present. In future research, half of these people should be sent the traditional call for papers alone and the other half should be sent the personalized invitation.

Participation

Because 41 of the 48 subjects (85.4%) participating in the 1986 ABA convention received at least one invitation, it seems possible that the personalized and poster invitations may have contributed to the increase in international participants this year.

Paper Presenters

There was a large increase in paper presenters for 1986. Even when compared with the 13 presenters in 1981, it is significantly larger. The experimenter tried to discover what change occurred in 1981 to cause such a large number of international presenters, and found no data pertaining to this. Seventy-seven percent of these people were Mexicans.

Poster Presenters

The increase in the 1986 poster presenters was dramatic. Only 13 people in total presented a poster in the five years before 1986. The number rose to twenty poster presenters in 1986.
Evaluation

Pre- and Post-Convention Evaluation Surveys

The pre- and post-convention surveys were conducted in order to collect data on the effectiveness of the convention as a mode of sharing behavioral technologies internationally. Data show that people attend the convention mostly for professional contacts, but information dissemination is also a part of the convention. If the suggestions are used, the surveys may also be useful for bettering the future convention experiences of international behaviorists. It would be useful to have some type of questionnaire as part of the annual convention, at least for the international behaviorists.

Funding

It is interesting to note that 100% of the persons who received the personalized invitation stated that it helped them obtain funds for attending the convention. Two persons who did not receive the personalized invitation also thought it would be useful in obtaining funds for traveling to the convention. It would be helpful to continue sending the personalized invitation with the call for papers to assist international presenters in attending the convention. Also, the personalized invitations should be sent earlier, in the
future, to assure enough time to apply for and obtain funding for the convention.

Translated Literature

From looking at the pre- and post-convention evaluation surveys, it appears that obtaining translated behavioral literature is a major concern of international behaviorists. Translating is expensive, but there is a major resource within the universities--the international students. It seems that international students in behavioral programs could get some type of credit for translating behavioral articles. Possibly ABA can set up an exchange system between American and non-American universities to send each other current literature. Or maybe ABA should form a sub-committee of bi-lingual members who would be interested in taking on this project.

ABA International Committee

As stated previously, the ABA International Committee sent out the poster invitations to international behaviorists written in their native languages. The responses to these invitations proved to be very time consuming to decipher, as they were also written in the native languages. In addition, several international behaviorists could not receive funding for
the convention unless the invitation was written in English. It is suggested that, in the future, all invitations be sent in English.

**Difficulties**

**Sample**

It is only plausible that the increase in international participation was due to the personalized or poster invitations. Because the sample was not chosen randomly, however, it is a possibility that definitely warrants further research. In future research, a random sample of all international ABA and ABA affiliate members should be compiled and randomly separated into groups, each receiving a different invitation.

**Mail**

It is possible that the subjects did not receive the invitations because of international postal problems. Although it is expensive, in the future it is advisable to send a certain percentage of the letters going to each country by registered mail. At least this may rule out a mail strike in the particular country to which the invitation is sent. It is probably the best check available other than calling each person, which is not cost-efficient. The only measure obtained for this study to indicate whether letters were received was the four
letters that were returned-to-sender. It can only be assumed by this experimenter that the other letters reached their destinations.

Names

It was difficult to figure out who-was-who when looking at presenter names and trying to match them to lists of letters sent out. Many Spanish names include several last names, and they are not always used consistently. It would be helpful if, in the call for papers and/or ABA Newsletter, everyone was requested to be consistent with their name.

Attendance

There was no way to tell how many international behaviorists attended but did not present at the convention. The ABA office only holds records on those who belong to ABA, and disposes of the rest of the registration forms. It would be helpful if these forms could also be saved and used to increase future ABA membership or at least to check the growth of international interest at the convention. There has been an upward trend in the international membership over the past six years, and there appears to be an upward trend in convention registration.
Non-Registrants

ABA staff suggested that many of the international attendees and presenters (poster presenters, in particular) this year did not register at the convention. This was difficult to control for, because it would require a monitor at all the poster sessions to check registrations. This, in combination with other problems mentioned, causes problems for analyzing convention registration data. Twenty-nine international behaviorists registered for the 1986 convention, but there were 49 presenters (although some sent in posters without attending). It is likely that the data collected are not representative of the number of actual international attendees. If all the presenters registered and there were no internationals attending only, 59% of the total participants would have registered. The fact that there were internationals attending and not presenting, suggests that many presenters are not registering.

International Committee Meeting

There was a communication problem that resulted in the ABA International Committee meeting time being left out of the Convention Program. This was the time that the pre-convention evaluation survey was supposed to be filled out. Most of the non-Americans did not attend
this meeting, so the experimenter had to find the internationals at the convention to give them the surveys. Not all the presenters received the surveys and not all who received the surveys completed them. In the future, a special invitation sent, before the convention, to the international behaviorists, giving time and place of the International Committee meeting, would be helpful.

Research

It seems that little research has been conducted on the dissemination of behavioral information, and very little on methods to increase attendance at conventions. Two computer searches were used. One requested articles on how to increase attendance/participation at a convention, looking for personalized invitations as an independent variable. The other dealt with how information is diffused/disseminated. Psychological Abstracts was searched by hand using the following terms: conference, convention, foreign, international relations, marketing, scientific communication, behavior modification, behavior change, behavior therapy, communication, participation, consequences, translations, diffusion, dissemination, prompts, information, innovation, and written communication. Also, less systematic article searching was conducted by the experimenter.
Reliability

For practical reasons, the experimenter was unable to conduct reliability checks in the ABA office. Time that was not available was needed from the ABA office staff to collect reliability data.

Additional Comments

This study could be more useful if the effectiveness of using personalized invitations is experimentally tested. Each of the invitations should be used individually, instead of in combination with each other. This could give data on the most cost-efficient way to send invitations for ABA and other conventions.

Other variables that could have influenced this study may be the growing popularity of ABA, or that sample bias influenced the responsiveness to the personalized invitations. Several of the Latin Americans received invitations for the first time, so maybe it only takes an invitation to get some people to attend. Receiving more than one invitation could also have an effect on the number of presenters. It’s possible that people respond more often with more prompts.

The convention was a success in that many more international behaviorists presented at the convention. Major steps are being made in the direction of expanding behaviorism internationally and the ABA convention is a good place to start.
APPENDIX A

Personalized Invitation
October 3, 1985

Dear "International Presenter's Name",

The Association for Behavior Analysis is selecting a few people to give high quality presentations for the 12th Annual Convention at the Hyatt-Regency Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, May 22-25. Because of your prestigious reputation, you have been recommended. We would be very honored if you would attend and present. The Convention serves as an interdisciplinary forum for people interested in all aspects of behavior analysis. The Convention is extremely educational as it allows participants to explore a wide variety of areas within behavioral psychology. It also provides an excellent opportunity to acquaint yourselves and with other important leaders in the field. These can be very valuable contacts for your career. It also is very beneficial to the organization you are affiliated with and the country you come from. The Convention is a vehicle for you to gain knowledge and in turn take it home with you to put to use for the benefit of your organization and your country.

Due to the high costs of the Convention and the limited resources available to ABA, the Program Committee cannot offer honoraria or expenses to invited presenters; however we will waive the registration fees and invite you to attend the Convention as a guest of the membership.

We are now preparing the Presentation List and need your response immediately. Responses must be in our office by November 8, 1985. No responses can be accepted after that date, although presentations can be called in to the ABA office on or before that date. The receipt of your presentation will be acknowledged by return mail. If you do not receive your acknowledgement within 7 weeks after mailing your submission, please call the ABA office, 616-383-1629.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Shery R. Chamberlain
Convention Manager
APPENDIX B

Poster Invitation
Your name is currently on file with the International Committee of the Association for Behavior Analysis. I am writing to you because I wonder if you have an interest in becoming involved with our organization. Specifically, I would like to invite you to submit a poster describing the type of work you do in your program. The poster would be displayed along with others from around the world at a poster session sponsored by the International Committee. The next meeting of the Association will be held in Milwaukee Wisconsin in late May, 1986. It will be our 12th annual meeting.

Enclosed you will find information about ABA and the specifications for the poster submissions. I will personally see that your submission is presented. Should you desire, I could tell interested persons a little about your activities if you provide me with the information. Also, if you desire, I could be responsible for the return of your submission—within the limitations of the postal service.

The submission deadline is November 5, 1985. The poster, however, does not need to be received until March of 1986. The November deadline is required to assemble the names of presenters in the program book. Please let me know of your intentions by November 5, 1985. If you have any questions, feel free to write me, or if feasible, call me. I await your reply.

Also, if you know of any other behavior analysts in your area who might be interested in our organization please share this letter with them.

Respectfully,

Richard W. Couch
for the ABA International Committee
Department of Human Development
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045
POSTER SPECIFICATIONS

1. Maximum size 4 x 4 feet (1.2 meters).

2. The poster should be made of two or three pieces to be assembled at the conference.

3. All materials used in making the poster should be attached to the poster board pieces.

4. A description of your setting, population, program, techniques, and personnel should be included.

5. Please use pictures if you have them. Also, any other identifying emblems, such as your country's flag, can be attached.

6. All text should be in English except when your language is appropriate (e.g., proper names or titles).

7. Please include your address for conference attendees to correspond with you and for return of your poster if you desire.
APPENDIX C

Interest Questionnaire
Results of the International Interest Questionnaire

Of the nine questionnaires returned, two letters thanked the researcher, but requested no assistance and did not complete the questionnaire. Below, some of the more notable results are included in the questionnaire.

Dear International Presenter:

Concerning your visit to the United States and your participation at the ABA convention, I would like to know ways that we can make your stay more enjoyable and more productive. Unfortunately, we have no funding for extra activities, but based on the questionnaire below we might be able to arrange some extras for you. Please fill out the questionnaire and return it to me at the address below.

1- Would you be interested in staying with other behaviorists or local families during your stay?

Yes: 5 No: 2

2- Would you be interested in arriving before the convention or staying after a few days to visit other behavioral centers?

Yes: 5 No: 2

If yes, where would be your first, second and third choice of places to visit?

1-

2-

3-

3- Do you require a translator for your presentation?

Yes: 2 No: 5

4- What languages do you speak?
5-Would you like to have a guide with you during your stay to help make sure everything goes smoothly, or would you be more comfortable to operate on your own?

Yes: 2 No: 5

Would you need a guide who can speak your native language?

If yes, what is your native language?

6-Which behaviorists would you like to meet while you are at the convention?
(Number of respondents who wanted to meet other behaviorists)

Yes: 5 No: 2

7-Would you attend international meetings at the beginning and the end of the convention?

Yes: 6 No: 2

8-What are your areas of interest in behavioral psychology?

9-Would you be interested in bringing slides of your country and making a short "advertisement" at the end of your speech to encourage others to visit your country?

Yes: 3 No: 4

10-Would you like to go on any touristic excursions while you are in the United States?

Yes: 2 No: 3 Already Arranged: 2

If yes, where would you like to go?

11-What suggestions do you have to increase the international communication between behaviorists?

More funds, more meetings, translate more Behavior Analysis literature into other languages, more communication with behaviorists at universities, an annual international conference held in different countries each year.

12-Is there anything else you would like to add to your agenda?

13-Would you be willing to host behaviorists from other countries in the future?

Yes: 7 No: 0
Thank-you for your time. I hope we can facilitate the enjoyment of your stay in the United States. Please have this returned by April 17, 1986.

Sincerely,

Marsha L. Benz
International Committee, Western Michigan University Chapter
Psychology Department
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI 48008
APPENDIX D

Pre- and Post-Convention Evaluation Surveys
On the left of the multiple choice questions is the number of responses for that particular answer. The numbers to the right of this raw data represent the percentage of those persons responding to that question out of the total surveys. Occasionally, the percentages will not equal 100% because the respondents were allowed more than one answer or not all of the questions were answered. There were 16 of the pre-convention survey and seven of the post-convention survey returned. Not all of the answers were completed on some surveys, but all the information collected is represented below.

Pre-convention Survey

1- Why did you decide to attend/present at this convention? (Please circle as many as apply)
   12 75% A-To educate myself
   7 44% B-To better educate others
   15 94% C-For professional contacts
   9 56% D-For career advancement
   3 19% E-Other (Please state)

2- What do you expect to get out of the convention? What do you expect to learn?
   11 69% A-A great deal
   4 25% B-A few things
   1 6% C-Very little
   0 0% D-Nothing

3- Why will this information be useful to you?
   10 63% A-It will help me advance my career
   9 56% B-It will be of personal use
   9 56% C-It will be useful to the organization/university I am affiliated with
   1 6% D-Other (Please state)

4- What do you plan to do with this information when you return to your country?
   14 88% A-Share it with my students
   14 88% B-Share it with my colleagues
   9 56% C-Put it to use in my community

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5 31% D - Put to use in governmental organizations
5 31% E - For personal uses
0 0% F - Other (Please state)

5-Do you remember receiving the personalized invitation last fall?
7 44% A - Yes
9 56% B - No

6-If yes to # 5, did the personalized invitation you received last fall influence your decision to attend the convention?
8 50% A - Yes (please explain): It made it easier to get funding.
1 6% B - No

7-Did you show the invitation to anyone?
7 44% A - Yes
0 0% B - No

8-Do you think this type of invitation would influence others to attend the convention?
10 63% A - Yes
2 13% B - No

9-Do you expect to report to anyone in your country or to present a paper concerning this convention upon your return?
11 69% A - Yes (who? Informal discussions, students, another convention, university seminars, Mexican Society of Psychology)
4 25% B - No

10-If there were translations of behavioral literature available, would you be interested in purchasing them?
9 56% A - Yes (Please specify language: Portuguese, Spanish, Thai)
6 38% B - No

11-List and briefly explain three of the biggest problems related to behavior analysis in your country:
7 44% - Publication/translation deficiencies (not enough available translated literature)
6 38% - Limited trained personnel/lack of good graduate programs
4 25% - Prejudice and misconceptions about behavior analysis
4 25% - Insufficient funds for research
4 25% - Conflicts with traditional psychology
3 19% - Not enough behaviorists
2 13% - Communication of behavior analysis
1 6% - Lack of international interaction between behavior analysts
1 6% - Difficulties with research equipment
1 6% - Political opposition (They think that behaviorism is a product of American imperialism)
1 6% - Poor marketing
1 6% - It's difficult to influence or change private
organizations

1 6% -Most of what there is doesn’t deal with central problems of human behavior
1 6% -Internal division among behavior analysts

12-How many times have you attended or presented at the ABA convention in the past?
A-Presented ___ times 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2
B-Attended Only ___ times 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2

13-Are you receiving funding to be at the convention?
14 88% A-Yes
2 13% B-No

Post-Convention Survey

1-Did you learn what you expected to learn?
5 71% A-Yes
2 29% B-No
If no, why?
1 14% -Too many things to do--couldn’t get organized

How can we better your experience for next year?
1 14% -Planning more appropriate contingencies during international presentations to increase attendance

2-What type of activities would you like to see next year?
1 14% -Provide more time for exchanging ideas (workshops/discussions)
1 14% -More emphasis on the experimental analysis of behavior
1 14% -More international activities
1 14% -Get better attendance at international papers
1 14% -More symposia and coordinated communications
1 14% -More international posters and papers from Latin American countries and Europe

3-How will this information (from answer #2) be useful to you and your affiliation/country?
3 43% -It would allow more time to exchange research ideas with other behavior analysts who are in the same areas (knowledge communication)
1 14% -Helpful in doing cross-cultural research

4-Please give us any more comments:
-The convention was a valuable experience, especially the discussion sessions about research problems
-Good international exchange
-Friendly and professional
-Doing a good job at expanding behaviorism
-For people from abroad, it would be nice to have a pre-convention meeting during which they can meet and Americans who can give a broad introduction to the applied behavior analysis field.
-Increase international participation by lowering fees for
Latin American countries, personal invitations to present papers, special airfares to the convention.
- Thought you might like to know about the Mexican Society of Behavior Analysis started in 1975. We also publish a journal.
- If you want Spanish translations, write to these publishing companies: Editorial Trillas in Mexico City and Fontanella, from Spain.
APPENDIX E

The Number of International Behaviorists Participating at the 1981 Through 1986 Conventions
The number of first author international paper and poster presenters at the ABA convention between 1981 and 1986, listed by continent.

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TOTAL NUMBER OF COUNTRIES REPRESENTED: 4 3 3 6 4 29

(Including poster and paper presenters)

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses reaspresent the number of poster presenters. If a person presents a paper and a paper, he/she is counted as a paper presenter.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Association for Behavior Analysis: An International Organization (1986). The international behavior analyst directory. Kalamazoo, MI.


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